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Mental Control Through Rhythmical Influence in the Learning of Typewriting

BY

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FOREWORD

THE object of this pamphlet is to pass on to those who are interested in typewriting work, some of the things that I have learned about typewriting during the past twenty years, while engaged in college and university work.

While the principles advocated may not be entirely new, and some of the subject matter is but a modified form of what has gone before, my observation leads me to believe that neither is quite fully understood, nor generally used.

For this reason, I submit what has proved its worth, in the hope that it may be found of practical value.

A. B. CROSIER

MENTAL CONTROL THROUGH RHYTHMICAL INFLUENCE IS THE SECRET OF TOUCH TYPEWRITING

THERE is nothing strangely new about the principles involved in the subject I have set before me to discuss. Mental Control is more or less perfectly understood to mean the power of mind to govern physical conduct in an act of self-expression; and rhythmical influence, stated broadly, is the playing out of this energy in such a way as to maintain a balanced state, or poise, of mind that induces uniform control of physical movements of the body.

But the great teaching problem is, how to impress an already acquired general knowledge of the principles on a student's mind in such a way that

he may employ these principles to his own advantage while learning to typewrite by touch. The object of all education, as I understand it, is to teach one to think straight, logically, accurately, and in sequence. To accomplish this end, no small amount of patience and an intimate co-operation between students and teacher is necessary. What applies to all education, naturally enough, includes the art of typewriting, because typewriting is a *mental act* — a *natural mode of self-expression.*

Now, to get the right perspective, let us assume that each individual is the center of the universe, in so far as his individual life is concerned. His chief concern is to know how to relate his life to other lives about him, and to impress his personality upon environment, in order to get the most possible out of life. This is accomplished through mental control. For instance, he sets

up an ideal in his mind and develops a mind picture; but the object desired is remote, with many intervening objects to block the way. If the impression in his mind is vivid enough, and his desire to attain it ardent enough, he will set about to remove these intervening objects that block his way, and manifest it. The methods by which that thing may be attained are so variant that care must be exercised to know which of the many methods is the right one to employ, and before we are in position to make such decision, we must take into consideration the different types of mind to be impressed. In a general way, the different mentalities may be classified into three groups: (1) Those minds that are acutely active in their reaction to mental stimulus; (2) those that are neither acutely active nor sluggish in their reaction; (3) those whose reactions are sluggish, even to a point of dullness. Therefore,

about all a teacher can do is to strike a happy medium that is all-inclusive.

MENTAL CONTROL

Now, let us reason together about this Mental Control.

As was previously stated, the mind must conceive a thing — set up an ideal and visionize it — before the individual, with any degree of certainty, can manifest it. The time required to manifest any conception of possible manifestation, is conditioned upon (1) the natural ability of the individual; (2) the number of obstacles between the individual and the object of his desire to be overcome; and (3) a determined will to persist, under proper direction, until the object shall have been attained. Thus, in typewriting, after a student gets a clear conception of what he desires to accomplish, all that remains to be done is to co-ordinate

the physical part of his body (the hands) involved in such act of self-expression with the mental impulse, to manifest in concrete form the finished page. Thus, it follows logically that his hands are inseparably connected with his brain impulse; and, when his brain thinks, his hands automatically and sympathetically respond to that impulse in an act of writing.

For the sake of name, let us call this process *autosuggestion*. Just how this power of autosuggestion is developed in typewriting, I shall try to set out clearly when presentation method is reached.

RHYTHMICAL INFLUENCE

Then, let us inquire what is meant by Rhythmical Influence.

Broadly stated, rhythm signifies symmetry, proportion, and division; and it suggests action that conforms to the laws of co-ordinated movement. Rhyth-

mical adjustment naturally divides itself into multiples of three and four, with an accent on the first count; as in three-four and in four-four time in musical rhythm. In typewriting it is any *characteristic arrangement* of *letters* in a word, corresponding to the *number* of letters in that word.

From its operation, I judge rhythm to be a force or vibration that maintains a state of stable equilibrium of the object it influences. As to just what this force is, I am not clear. Neither do I know what electricity, magnetism, gravity, are. But this much does seem clear to an observing mind: that all matter is subject to this rhythmical influence, this wavelike recurrence, the frequency of which is conditioned upon the object influenced. Not only are the less stable forms of matter, as air and water, subject to its influence, and exert an influence on all other forms of matter, but each particle of matter has its own

rate of vibration which may be influenced by some external vibration. Take as an illustration: A dog trotting across a bridge at a uniform pace will set the whole structure in motion. Soldiers approaching a bridge are required to break step to prevent vibration that might cause the bridge to collapse. Again, it has been said that a single sustained tone from a violin that corresponds to the keynote of a large building, if persisted in, would wreck the building. And again, a moving train sets up a vibration that may cause windows miles away to rattle, and further, heavy speculators not infrequently closet themselves for a few minutes at the beginning of each business day and allow their minds to drift till they catch up the financial current of thought, before entering upon their daily tasks.

We can see the operation of this rhythmical influence all about us in

nature. What would happen if the planets did not maintain their uniform rhythmical movements? We expect to see change of seasons come around about the same time each year. The moon, the tide, night and day, return of hunger and sleep, the pulse beat, respiration — in fact, everything is under the influence of this force. Then, why should not the mind be under the same influence? And further, is it unreasonable to assume that the mind has its own rate of vibration, and that *this rate may be changed*, and *is changed* through educative influences?

Granted that this suggestion holds true to fact, the teacher's greatest problem in presenting the subject of typewriting (or any other subject, for that matter, that involves physical conduct) is to put this notion clearly into the student's mind, that he may have a definite, specific understanding how to proceed in order to get the most out

of his work. From the outset teach him to measure his movements, not by some external impulse, but by silently counting out his operations. By such method, the rhythmical impulse originates in his mind, and leads him to give himself over completely to that thing for the time being. This rhythmical habit develops slowly at first, but in a relatively short time, autosuggestion takes control of his mental processes; and as speed increases, his movements automatically adjust to new conditions as his mind center changes. In the course of time, his entire conscious mental energy is directed to the subject matter in an act of self-expression with little or no thought of his physical movements.

Now that I have expressed my views regarding these pre-approach principles, let us take up a discussion of how these principles apply in training students to do touch typewriting.

METHOD

When the student has been thoroughly acquainted with the care and adjustment of his machine, he is told how to assume a rhythmical position before his machine:

Body supported at the hips, and slightly inclined forward; feet flat upon the floor, forearms extended about on a level with the shift key, elbows very slightly extended, the wrists elevated just a little; the knuckles lowered, and the fingers arched, as in piano playing; the little fingers resting on "a" and ";" and the first, second, and third fingers of both hands hovering lightly over the adjoining keys "lkj sdf." In such position, he can make free use of the finger tips to exercise control over any character on the keyboard. And, too, his body is perfectly poised in a rhythmical state.

It sometimes happens that a stu-

dent who has employed the "hunt and pick" method in learning comes in. The only possible way to align him up rightly is to treat him as a beginner. In fact, he demands more personal attention than a beginner, because incorrect habits of expression can be controlled only by new correct habits that are strong enough to keep the old ones under control. Typing, as in all expressions involving physical movements, demands complete conservation in each movement. Otherwise there is lost motion and a consequent loss in efficiency.

Lost motion also is very apparent when he disregards a rotary movement of hand in throwing the carriage back and in the use of fumbling movements to insert the paper in his machine. But the faulty habits are corrected without much difficulty by a little timely supervision.

Now that the preliminary has been cleared away, the student is brought

face to face with his first co-ordination drill: "jhfg, fgjh, juyj, frtf, jmnj, fvbf." These symbols are chosen because they call into action the index fingers, about which the mind has centered since infancy in pointing to objects, or in picking up things. Consequently, mental control has been acquired unconsciously. For this reason they are given double duty to perform. This simple drill affords a splendid opportunity to impress upon his mind from the beginning the importance of rhythmical influence, by having him measure out his operations to very slow counting. By such method, the impulse to influence the brain originates in the brain, and hence is more effective than some external impulse picked up from a metronome, for instance. In all practice work, insist that he watch the copy, not his hands, while operating. This drill is used until he works out a perfect page. By the time this is done, he

is beginning to think of the characters collectively, in groups, rather than as isolated symbols. In short, he has put into his mind a nucleus of typing experience around which to build larger experiences as the work progresses.

Then, he is taught to translate this group thinking into words, as, "jug, fur, but, buy, rug, thumb, untruth," which give him power to express the knowledge gained, in concrete form. (A perfect page of this drill is required.)

In order to facilitate development of muscles engaged to do writing, the following finger drills (to be practiced twenty or thirty minutes daily outside of class) are suggested. Just before going to bed is the best time to do these drills, for the reason that the subconscious mind works over the impressions, during sleeping hours.

Before taking up this practice he should make a chart of the keyboard, to fasten to his study table. On this

chart should be two small circles for thumb rests about where the space bar of the machine would come. This chart is to be used with Drills I and II. In Drills III and IV the forearms should not touch a table.

An interval of one second should be used for each count.

Drill I. Place both hands in writing position, as instructed, fingers arched and knuckles low. Beginning with the index finger of the right hand, on count one, raise in curved position as high as possible; lower on count two; on count three raise, and lower on count four. Do the same exercise with the second, third, and little fingers. Go through the same drill with the left hand while the right hand is held in writing position. Then, repeat with both hands in unison.

Drill II. Put hands in writing position, as above. On count one, spread the fingers of the right hand just as far apart as possible while the fingers remain in curved position. Close on count two. Open on three, and close on fourth count. Do the same way with the left hand while the right hand is held in writing position. Then repeat with both hands in unison.

Drill III. Extend the forearms to writing position, with wrists about on alignment with the arms, but keep the knuckles lowered. Then separate the

fingers and thumbs as widely as possible; throw fingers back, and grip the hand into shape of a bird's claws. But use care not to close the hand; don't close the fingers into the palms, but hold them apart and rigidly curved while you grip as tightly as you can. Hold this position till you count four, and relax on fifth count.

Drill IV. Forearms extended as above. On count one, throw the palms out and the finger tips back; on count two, close the first and second joints of the fingers and the first joint of the thumbs. Draw the finger tips against the fingers above the knuckle joints just as firmly as possible and hold the thumb L shaped and extended. On the third count, while holding the fingers in this rigid condition, close the hand perfectly tight, as if in an act of hitting something. On count four, still holding the fingers rigid, return to position of a bird's claws, when in an act of seizing something.

OBJECT OF DRILLS

What are we accomplishing in these drills? A conscious rhythmical control over the writing muscles; that stimulates wonderfully mental control over finger movements. Both of these, essential in doing rapid and accurate typing work, soon sink into the automatic, thus leaving the full conscious

mental energy to be expended in interpretation. In fact, his thinking and acting are as one.

It does not follow, however, that this oneness can be accomplished without prolonged and patient practice. Far from that. The things of life that are worth while require time and effort to attain. But what I do contend is, if this rhythmical mental control idea is once understood and put into practice, he will go much faster, and much farther; and with infinitely more versatility and ease, than he would be able to do without such influence. It conforms to nature, and her rhythmical laws; hence, it is basic.

How do I know that a student has grasped the big idea?

I judge from his finished work, in the same way that an experienced mind would judge the quality of English from spoken or written words. There is but one standard in typewriting that is

worth while — perfect work, technique, placement, balance. This fact is early impressed on the student's mind. He naturally sets up a high ideal, or standard. Further, the importance of doing this is constantly suggested to him by notations on his manuscript. These notations tend to drive home the principles that we want him to get. Step by step mental control is acquired; and what is most encouraging of all, the mind and hands co-ordinate so sympathetically that as the mind center changes (as it does from day to day) an automatic readjustment takes place without conscious effort, and speed with accuracy maintains regardless of the nature of the subject matter he may be writing. On the other hand, if this conclusion is not true, why does the penmanship, as taught in the grades by a drawing method, go all to pieces when the student puts himself to the test in written expression, when he gets along

to high school or college work? To my way of thinking he had not been taught the importance of mental control under rhythmical influence; and when his mind center changed there did not exist proper mind and hand co-ordination.

When the student has covered about five or six lessons in his text, a daily review from the beginning of ten high frequency words, singly and in series, is taken up; these ten words are placed on a chart in the front of the room. First each word is timed one minute; later these same words are written over and over in serial order (in sentence form) to build up power of rhythmical progression. When these drills have been gone through with, each student grades his own manuscript; and as a penalty for each error committed, ten words are deducted from the total number of words written. This remainder divided by ten gives the net number of words a minute.

While this drill is intended secondarily to increase speed in writing through rhythmical influence, the main thought is to build mental control, by counting out each movement, to give versatility. This counting out practice serves the same purpose in typewriting that rehearsing a song or an oration does in singing or speaking. This habit of versatility grows; it becomes a matter of habit; as, for instance, in the case of a juggler, who tosses his clubs, or balls, with no particular thought to each movement.

By the time the ninth lesson in the text has been covered, figure drills are introduced. Finger control over figures is acquired just as logically and naturally as control over letters, if the practice is properly directed. The idea is to connect each figure with an already acquired habit — a simple application of the inductive method of presentation.

Practice, in order, and in reverse order,

very slowly at first, the letters of the alphabet, each followed by the number immediately below in whatever series you may be working; and space once between groups, thus: Series 1, a1, b2, c3, etc. to z6; or, Series 5, a5, b6, c7, to z0; or again, Series 10, a0, b1, c2, to z5. A glance at the table will show that every letter of the alphabet is followed by all of the digits and the cipher.

When sufficient skill has been acquired in locating figures as units on the keyboard, the following groups should be practiced slowly and persistently to translate this unit thinking into group expression. This control is accomplished by placing the letter to be impressed, in a position just before the figure to be related. Thus, following series 1, 2, 3, 4 (which give the digits and cipher in regular and reverse order of progression), it will be observed in series 5 that "x" at the end of "affix" comes next to "2" in the group "21597," and

Series	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4.	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5.	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
6.	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1
7.	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2
8.	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3
9.	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4
10.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5

Concentration Drill Chart

"a" "s" "d" and "f," following in succession at the end of the words "medio," "vices," "would," "gruff," all occur before "2" which is the key figure to the group of figures, "21597." You will notice, too, that the endings of all these words are selected with a view to cover that section of the keyboard immediately underneath the figures to be selected, just as fully as possible.

1.	throb	12345	frown	12345	fling	12345
	leash	12345	light	12345		
2.	mealy	67890	cliff	67890	water	67890
	board	67890	glide	67890		
3.	relax	09876	waltz	09876	cilia	09876
	stays	09876	below	09876		
4.	serum	54321	adieu	54321	stack	54321
	alibi	54321	tango	54321		
5.	affix	21597	media	21597	vices	21597
	would	21597	gruff	21597		
6.	sling	20486	sinew	20486	grave	20486
	finer	20486	mount	20486		
7.	borax	31245	opera	31245	mills	31245
	fried	31245	cliff	31245		
8.	shrug	39876	squaw	39876	guise	39876
	furor	39876	snort	39876		
9.	cynic	42395	ultra	42395	heels	42395
	could	42395	grief	42395		

10.	fling	41086	throw	41086	where	41086
	tutor	41086	sight	41086		
11.	topic	52198	larva	52198	firms	52198
	hound	52198	brief	52198		
12.	sting	53476	squaw	53476	adage	53476
	minor	53476	sport	53476		
13.	rheum	62457	oaken	62457	medal	62457
	black	62457	hunch	62457		
14.	swamp	63108	cargo	63108	genii	63108
	adieu	63108	decay	63108		
15.	idiom	70946	baron	70946	rival	70946
	smirk	70946	faith	70946		
16.	crisp	71385	curio	71385	radii	71385
	noyau	71385	filmy	71385		
17.	odium	83507	grain	83507	still	83507
	pluck	83507	leash	83507		
18.	crisp	82496	piano	82496	villi	82496
	perdu	82496	gaily	82496		
19.	swarm	91082	wagon	91082	vital	91082
	brick	91082	reach	91082		
20.	trump	93756	bravo	93756	rabbi	93756
	adieu	93756	spicy	93756		

SUGGESTIONS FOR RHYTHMICAL ALPHABETICAL SCALE PRACTICE

1. Practice the alphabetical scale in the regular and reverse order, without spacing.

2. Then practice the alphabet in groups, spacing once.

(*a*) ab cd ed gh ij kl mn op qr st uv wx yz
(*b*) zy wx vu ts rq po nm lk ji hg fe dc ba
(*c*) abc def ghi jkl mno pqr stu vwx yza
(*d*) azy xwv uts rgp onm ljk ihg fed bca
(*e*) abcd efgh ijkl mnop qrst uvwx yzab
(*f*) bazy xwvu tsqr ponm lkji hgfe dcba
(*g*) abcde fghij klmno pqrst uvwxy zabcd
(*h*) dcbaz yxwvu tsrqp onmlk jighf edcba

3. Hold down the shift key and practice the alphabet in regular, and reverse order, without spacing.

4. Hold down shift key with the little finger of the left hand, and practice the alphabet as shown above (*a*) to (*b*) inclusive; but release the shift key each time when spacing.

The object of these drills is to develop skill in manipulating the keys and the shift key and to give alertness of mind and dexterity of hand to adjust quickly to any syllabic division in a word, just as scale practice on a musical instrument gives power to handle constantly changing arrangements of notes in a musical passage.

CO-ORDINATION DRILL IN THE USE OF PUNCTUATION MARKS

"Is that that, that that, that they say that that is? No! That that, is not that that, that they say that that is; but: (1) that that, that we think that that is, is (2) that that."

THE SENTENCE UNIT

By the time the theory of the text has been completed, he will have progressed sufficiently in sentence building to be able to think connectedly. His mind center has changed sufficiently to enable him to grasp thought expression as a unit rather than the word as a unit; therefore, the following all-keyboard sentences which have been selected from various sources, are introduced. Ten minutes' practice from a chart is devoted to these sentences each day before regular work is taken up. The student is required to check his own work, and to pass it in for

criticism. Later it is passed back to him.

1. The boy was not lazy and jumped up quickly before the box gave way.
2. My help squeezed in and joined the weavers again before six o'clock.
3. They provoked a quarrel by jealously mixing a few jet black cats.
4. You spoke about having a ten quart zinc box joined firmly forward.
5. Whenever the black fox jumped, the squirrel gazed very suspiciously.
6. We dislike to exchange job lots of sizes varying from a quarter up.
7. The judicious advocate will never forget that a good cause may be quickly lost by too much zeal.
8. Dazzling jewels, pendant from her neck, were thrown quite in the shadow by exceeding wit, which ever flashed from her brilliant mind.
9. Old and quaint maxims filled the pages of that very curious book, on which, with quiet joy, he gazed for hours together.
10. The lazy, brown-eyed lynx often jumps quickly from its lair over a log.
11. Young quails were baked for the buxom lady from Xenia, she also bas a cup of coffee.
12. "Please, sir," she said, "I have 54,067 boxes of quails and 2385 crates of coffee."
13. Just after making queer discoveries the explorer was frozen in his big kayak.
14. With a qualm the jolly first mate expected a song about the greasy viking.

15. The composer White just managed to see a convict quickly fix the buzz saw.

16. The lazy queen who expected to live by working very little jammed her fingers.

17. The question of prizes was fixed up with the government and the Black jury.

18. My Exide truck will probably haul a dozen loads of gravel just as quickly.

19. Joe asserted that the quick brown fox slyly jumped over the lazy dog.

ALL-KEYBOARD LETTER

Union City, Tennessee
January 10, 1920

Messrs. D. B. Ibsen & T. Z. Quixly
Louisville, Kentucky

Gentlemen:

In confirming our message of yesterday — " Accept offer 450 barrels ' Young & Osgood CCC,' like sample at $6.37 " — let us urge immediate shipment: and send bill to Ashton & Vance, c/o Houston Station, So. York St., this city.

C. M. & St. P. R. R. car #6336, and C. & N. W. R. R. car #7385 are in; but we find one car fully 25% below grade, due to dampness gathered in a leaky car. We shall probably have time tomorrow to make a thorough examination, and will report fully Friday or Saturday.

We can furnish clean new barrels in car lots, f. o. b. our siding: Gum @ 37½; Red Oak @ 29¼; Hickory @ 46¾. We can supply unbranded,

"Virginia" Jute Sacks, sewed, @ 5¢ in quantity lots: seamless cotton sacks (branded "XXXX"), @ 19¢ in lots of 500 or more.

At what can you furnish shelled corn in car lots?

Very truly yours,

E. L. PAXTON & CO. (Limited)

By .....

Auditor

ABP/ZUK

(inclosure)

THE PARAGRAPH UNIT

By the time these sentences have been standardized in his life, his mind center again has changed from a single sentence, as a unit, to the paragraph as a unit. At this point the all-keyboard business letter, shown below, is introduced. At least one copy each day should be written till fifty perfect copies shall have been completed.

Then, from this point on, ten minutes is devoted, the first part of each interval, to writing Underwood, Remington, and other similar typewriting drills, in connection with speed drills of the text.

Direct dictation from these exercises is stressed to give the student adaptability. By the time tabulating, billing, law forms, shall have been completed in the text, the student has gained such mastery over the keys, through mental control under rhythmical influence, that he can write with the same facility, accuracy, clearness that he can speak. He has made the machine subservient to hand control; and his hands, through autosuggestion, are completely subservient to mental control. As he thinks, so does he act.

Now, let us pick up the various threads of argument that we have gone through and weave them into some practical conclusions as to what is gained by learning touch typewriting by the foregoing method.

Aside from the art of typewriting he has gained mental control that may be translated into other conduct: (1) He has unified in his life one particular

thing that serves well as a standard by which to gauge other things; (2) he has kindled desire to excel; (3) he has learned many things about form; (4) he has whetted his will to overcome obstacles through patience and persistence; (5) he has developed observation that has a vital bearing on all mental processes; (6) he has acquired concentration — the complete giving over of self for the time being to one particular aim — which intensifies all effort.

And, note carefully, all of these spring from a mental state that is built up under Rhythmical Influence. It seems perfectly logical to conclude, then, that mental control through rhythmical influence *is* the Secret of Touch Typewriting.

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